

The Rocky Hill Town Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, June 15, 2015 in the Council Chambers of Town Hall. Mayor Henry Vassel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Those in attendance: Deputy Mayor Nadine Bell, Councilor Meg Casasanta, Councilor Guy Drapeau, Councilor Joe Kochanek, Councilor Bill MacDonald, Councilor Tim Moriarty, Councilor Frank Szeps and Councilor Cathy Vargas. Also present: Town Manager Guy Scaife and Finance Director John Mehr.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

#### Public Comment

There was no public comment.

#### Appointments/Resignations

Majority Leader Bell and Minority Leader Moriarty had no appointments or resignations.

#### Approval of Minutes

##### A. Town Council Meeting – 6/1/15

Councilor Szeps made a motion to approve the Minutes of the June 1, 2015 meeting of the Town Council. The motion was seconded by Councilor Kochanek and adopted. Ayes-7, Vassel, Bell, Casasanta, Drapeau, Kochanek, Szeps and Vargas. Abstentions-2, MacDonald and Moriarty.

#### Subcommittee Reports

##### A. Finance

Councilor Vargas said the Finance Committee had met on June 10, 2015. The Tax Collector gives updates at this Committee's meetings. Revenue is being brought into the Town and the Tax Collector is doing a great job in trying to collect back taxes. There were sixteen pending accounts for the Tax Sale and the Town has received \$105,475 as of May 31, 2015. Three of the accounts have been paid in full and the thirteen remaining accounts have a balance of \$146,860. The Tax Collector's office placed 104 delinquent real estate liens with the Town Clerk's office on April 21, 2015 and 81 of these still have liens as of May 31, 2015. The delinquent motor vehicle taxes from 1999 to 2012, in the amount of almost \$1,200,000, were given to the Credit Information Bureau on February 5, 2015. The grand total collected as of May 31, 2015 was a little shy of \$2,000. The Grand List for 2013 was sent to the Credit Information Bureau for collection on May 1, 2015 and there are 1,049 accounts needing to be collected on. As of May 31, 2015, approximately \$25,800 was collected.

Councilor Vargas said the Town is going to be issuing \$14,500,000 in BANS due to the monthly project costs for Rocky Hill High School (RHHS). It is being found out that the monthly costs for this project are estimated at being approximately \$2,000,000 per month for the upcoming construction months this summer. The sale date for the issuing of this was June 16, 2015 and the settlement date was June 29, 2015. These will be due on February 25, 2016. The allocation of the total is \$13,500,000 for the RHHS project and \$1,000,000 for the project for the roads.

The other items from that Finance Committee meeting could be found on this evening's Consent Agenda.

**B.     Public Safety**

Deputy Mayor Bell said the Public Safety Committee had met this evening at 6:00 p.m. The RHFD had reported about Jerry Barr's retirement after thirty-nine years and one month of service to them. Deputy Mayor Bell said they are offering their appreciation and congratulations to Jerry Barr.

The RHFD had received a letter from the girlfriend of the accident victim of a horrific crash that had happened on I-91 North and she had expressed her appreciation to the RHFD. Deputy Mayor Bell said the RHPD and the RHVAA had also responded to that.

There are three new Police recruits. There are fifty-one residents at 60 West Street and the RHPD had one call there this past month with regards to a patient saying they were being harassed by the Staff.

**C.     Government Operations Committee**

Deputy Mayor Bell said the Government Operations Committee's next meeting will be held on July 20, 2015.

**D.     Land Acquisition & Farmland Preservation**

Councilor Szeps said the Open Space Land Acquisition & Farmland Preservation Subcommittee did not have a meeting this evening and they are working with a couple of property owners behind the scenes to follow this Subcommittee's mission of trying to keep farming viable in this Town. The Subcommittee will hopefully be meeting with the landowners next week or the week after that. He is optimistic about reporting something at a later date.

**E.     Senior Affairs Committee**

Councilor Vargas said the Senior Affairs Committee had a meeting prior to this evening's Town Council one. Town Manager Scaife had given an update at that Committee's meeting on long term facilities expansion with regards to the possibility of them using Moser School and they will be working more on exploring other options. Councilor Vargas said Lisa Zerio (Director of Parks and Recreation & Custodial Services) had also given an update on what the Staff has been working on. There was a rendering in Council Chambers at this time which showed that there

will be a patio off of the Gazebo and there will be bocce courts, etc. This should be done by this September and this is in the budget. This Committee won't be meeting again until this September so that Town Manager Scaife will have time to work on space issues.

F. Liaison to State Representative and State Senator

Councilor Szeps said State Representative Guerrera and State Senator Doyle have been contacted and he is looking to set up another meeting date with the Town Council so that they can be updated on the recent budget activities at the State level.

Consent Agenda

Deputy Mayor Bell made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilor Szeps and adopted unanimously.

A. Dairy Farm Tax Abatement

Resolution  
Town Council  
June 15, 2015

BE IT RESOLVED THAT \$2,540.23 abatement to Jean Backiel be approved in accordance with the adopted ordinance regarding Tax Abatements for Dairy Farms.

B. Refund of Overpayment of Property Taxes due to Stipulated Judgement

Resolution  
Town Council  
Property Tax Refund  
June 15, 2015

BE IT RESOLVED THAT a tax refund in the following amounts be and is hereby authorized for the following taxpayers:

<u>List Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2013-01-10242	Auxxi Horizon Commons LLC	\$ 27,719.32
2013-01-13094	Henkel Corporation	\$115,710.09
2013-01-13378	K Brothers LLC	\$ 3,810.82
2013-01-15348	Poughkeepsie Shopping CTR Inc.	\$ 11,700.62
2013-01-15849	RP Glenbrook LLC	\$ 24,945.92

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Town Council authorization is required for tax refunds in excess of \$1,500. This refund is due to overpayment by taxpayers in connection with court stipulated judgments. Passage of this Resolution is recommended.

C. Refund of Overpayment of Property Taxes

Resolution  
Town Council  
Property Tax Refund  
June 15, 2015

BE IT RESOLVED THAT a tax refund in the following amounts be and is hereby authorized for the following taxpayers:

<u>List Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2013-01-12300	Corelogic Services LLC	\$2,302.50
2013-01-12390	Corelogic Services LLC	\$1,912.83

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Town Council authorization is required for tax refunds in excess of \$1,500. This refund is due to overpayment by taxpayers in connection with court stipulated judgments. Passage of this resolution is recommended.

D. Suspense List

Resolution  
Town Council  
FY 2013-14 Property Tax Suspense List Approval  
June 15, 2015

BE IT RESOLVED THAT taxes on the entire Grand List, in the amounts below be and are hereby transferred to Suspense:

		<u># of Accounts</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2011	Personal Property	39	\$ 35,846.66
2011	Motor Vehicle and Supplemental Motor Vehicle	255	\$ 34,728.81
		_____	_____
	Totals	294	\$ 70,575.47
		=====	=====

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

The attached list of taxes is recommended for reclassification to the Suspense List, and represents the balances of such Grand List years as of May 18, 2015. This is transferring the entirety of these years and their accounts to suspense in no way limits the Town's rights of enforcement of collection.

New Business

A. Update on Proposed Elm Ridge Parking Lot paving to be performed by Town Center West Developer – Guy Scaife

Town Manager Scaife said they had hoped to have gotten both of the west and east parking lots at Elm Ridge Park paved last year in the fall. Richard Vicino, the developer of Town Center West, had made that commitment but when he was doing the research for that it was found out that one of the parking lots near the retention pond had water that was twelve inches down so that surface could not tolerate heavy equipment. That project was put on hold and Richard Vicino engaged a geotechnical engineering firm to go there to do an evaluation and see what could be done. A subsurface drain system under the pavement was the solution so that they could get the water out of there before they looked at paving that. He also engaged a design company to do this. There was a meeting at Town Hall last week with Lisa Zerio, Richard Vicino and the Engineering Staff. Town Manager Scaife said there were some questions about the actual design for the orientation of the drain pipes so they asked Richard Vicino to go back to look at that. Town Manager Scaife said there is a challenge they have because Richard Vicino's commitment is only for the paving. It doesn't include the research cost to have a drain system designed and installed. Town Manager Scaife said they need to get the cost of that to figure out what really can be done. Richard Vicino's commitment is to totally finish the one parking lot with the drain system but this will "eat" into any of the funds that are available for the second parking lot. Town Manager Scaife said the priority is to get the parking lot that will need the subsurface drain. Jim Sollmi (Director of Community Development Services) and Steve Sopelak (Town Engineer) have worked with Richard Vicino and his design team as to how this should work out. Town Manager Scaife said Richard Vicino would like to do this as soon as he can. There is a two week window in the second half of this September to the first of this October where the summer activities will have ended and this will be before the fall activities will begin so this is when they are planning on getting this work done.

Councilor Moriarty confirmed that what is there can't be taken up and that something else can be put down because of the water that is there and because of the heavy equipment. He asked how they were able to do this in the beginning. Town Manager Scaife said he didn't know and there obviously was a different scenario at that time. Mayor Vasel said what typically happens when there is a wet area is that they will probably wait until it is very dry and a binder course can be put down. They can let that set for a couple of weeks and then they can come back. Councilor Moriarty asked what the thickness of the pavement is that they have right now. Town Manager Scaife said he didn't know. Mayor Vasel said Richard Vicino had sent them pictures about nine months or one year ago when he had done the borings. Richard Vicino had dug test holes and water was coming up. Town Manager Scaife said the borings had been done during a dry period. There is a movement in water and some of the areas are drier now whereas they had been wet thirty years ago and other areas are wetter now. Councilor Moriarty said there is the runoff from

the top parking lot that isn't going into the catch basins. Anything else that has been filled in the back there is going to raise the water level down below. That is the low level of Elm Ridge Park. Mayor Vassel believes that Richard Vicino is trying to do that parking lot as the lowest one and that will hopefully dry the top one. Mayor Vassel is excited about the Miracle Field coming along with all the other drains and hopefully that will dry up a lot of that area too.

Councilor Vargas asked what the timing is for doing this paving compared to the Miracle Field being done because they don't want to have equipment over what has just been paved in order to do that field. Mayor Vassel said those will be far away from each other. Councilor Vargas thought fancy speed bumps are supposed to be done too and she told Councilor MacDonald that she thought he had been explaining those in the past. Councilor MacDonald remembers something to the effect of having some speed bumps done but he thought that Richard Vicino's accepted proposal was just for the parking lots and he said Town Manager Scaife would have all of the details for that. Town Manager Scaife said he didn't recall and he will need to check that but the speed bumps would be minor in terms of installing them.

Councilor Szeps said if the parking lot is done prior to the Carnival being held that he knows that they have a tendency to have stakes driven into the parking lot to anchor some of the equipment. He then asks if that is taboo and Lisa Zerio said yes.

**B. Discussion and Possible Action re: Unanticipated Revenue Update – Guy Scaife**

Town Manager Scaife said there will be a slight reduction of approximately \$4,000 in some transportation monies in terms of State grants but they will have an increase of approximately \$134,000 in Education Cost Sharing. They are netting approximately \$130,000. It is important for them to keep in mind that the legislature is looking at a special session and things aren't totally done but he said this does look safe. He referred to what Councilor Vargas had mentioned about the good fortune they have had in collecting some of the back taxes earlier than they actually had expected. Town Manager Scaife said that ironically was planned for next year's budget so this will go as a negative when looking towards next year's commitment. The Town got a conveyance fee late last week for the sale of 963 Elm Street (Elms Common). They have had a little increase in some of the expenses at the RHPD but they are doing well overall.

Town Manager Scaife told the Town Council that he put down "Possible Action" for this agenda item to see if they had a consensus on a direction. There had been a question when their legislative delegation was in as to whether something could be done to provide additional tax relief to seniors who are significantly financially challenged. He has heard this question raised before too since he became Town Manager. He doesn't think anything from the State level will come forward. He has talked with the Town Assessor (Stuart Topliff) and they feel that a fairly modest program can be developed which will be driven off of need. Town Manager Scaife told the Town Council if this is their desire then he can probably bring a proposal forward to them at their next meeting. This won't amount to a lot of money but every dollar will help he said. He told the Town Council if they are to do that then at their next meeting, they ought to be given a review of the proposal and the programs that exist. Councilor Szeps said he will support the program. Councilor Moriarty asked if this would be a one shot deal or if this will be budgeted from here on out. Town Manager Scaife thinks this would be something that they will plan to

have going forward but it could be reversed though. Councilor Moriarty thinks this is something to look at and he thinks they would need to know how many seniors would need this, which could change from year to year. Mayor Vassel told the Town Council if they had no objection then they could let Town Manager Scaife put a plan together for their next meeting. Councilor Moriarty asked if there is a State program where they would give the money to a senior but then they would come back later on for a senior's house to get the money. Mayor Vassel said there are tax freezes that attach to homes. He thinks the additional tax relief for seniors is a great idea. He thanked Town Manager Scaife and said he appreciates this. He had visited a couple of weeks ago with the seniors for lunch and some of them had commented about how their water and electric bills are going up.

#### Mayor's Report

The project has been completed for two new rooftop air conditioning units, which are high efficiency ones, for the Senior Center. These will keep the seniors very comfortable and cool in the summer.

Mayor Vassel said he was fortunate to visit Alex's Lemonade Stand to fight childhood cancer last week. That was run by Alexandra Pugliese, who is a fifth grade student at Griswold Middle School. This was the fourth consecutive year that Alexandra Pugliese has participated in this and she raised just over \$1,400 this year and almost \$5,000 over the past four years. Mayor Vassel thanked Alexandra Pugliese on behalf of the Town Council and said this is just another great example of their community supporting a great cause.

Mayor Vassel went to a lacrosse tournament in Somers this past weekend where Rocky Hill was well represented with fans and teams. He congratulated all of them.

Mayor Vassel reminded everyone that school will be out this week and he told everyone to please drive carefully. He congratulated everyone who is stepping up and who is graduating.

The surveying for Miracle Field is complete and Geotech will be performing their work very soon.

WFSB posted a list of the top ten places to live in Connecticut and Mayor Vassel was very pleased to announce that Rocky Hill is one of the top ten.

Mayor Vassel said he will be kissing a llama at West Hill School in the fall if West Hill School students read over seven thousand books over the summer and he will be wearing red pajamas.

#### Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Scaife said they are in the middle of negotiations with two of their bargaining units and that takes a lot of effort.

The Highway Department and the Engineering Department are continuing to gear up for paving. The Police special detail is being lined up for the areas where that will be needed.

Tax bills went out last week. Town Manager Scaife said there was a letter in the vehicle tax bills from Mayor Vasel, as well as a two sided letter that covers the senior type of activities. Town Manager Scaife said this was put in the vehicle tax bills because those go to a far higher percentage of their citizens and there are so many of the real estate tax bills that go to a lending agency so this wouldn't get to the citizens' homes. There are a few citizens that don't have vehicles so he told them to let the Town know if they want the newsletter and Mayor Vasel's letter.

There is some new signage on the side of the Community Center that is on the Old Main Street side. This now reads "Community Center and Senior Center" instead of just "Community Center". There will also be a sign out on the Church Street side that will state "Welcome to Senior Center and Community Center".

#### Executive Session

A. Executive Session re: Strategy and Negotiations: Potential Land Acquisition with the Town Manager

Deputy Mayor Bell made a motion to go into Executive Session re: Strategy and Negotiations: Potential Land Acquisition with the Town Manager at 7:24 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vargas and adopted unanimously.

Councilor Vargas made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:45 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Casasanta and adopted unanimously.

#### Adjournment

Councilor Vargas made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Casasanta and adopted unanimously.

As there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth